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C U P I D

AND

P S Y C H E:

A

MYTHOLOGICAL TALE.

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*Ex Dactyliothecca Ducis Marlburgiensis.*

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C U P I D  
AND  
P S Y C H E:  
A  
MYTHOLOGICAL TALE,  
FROM THE  
GOLDEN ASS  
OF  
APULEIUS.

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SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

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1800.





A FEMALE relation of the AUTHOR's, having seen a manuscript version of the Story of CUPID and PSYCHE, mentioned it to him as a subject peculiarly susceptible of poetical embellishment, and recommended him to attempt it.—He at one time thought of giving an analysis of the fable, but finding that each commentator explained almost every subordinate circumstance in a different manner, he resolved to decline the task. It may, however, be proper to remark, that in the main point they all agree; and when we consider that APULEIUS was a Platonist and a Mystic, and that he is perpetually recurring to the rites and cabbala of the many religious fraternities into which he had been initiated, we can scarcely doubt, that, by the adventures and marriage of CUPID and PSYCHE, he meant to typify, after various trials and probations, the final union of the soul of man to Divine Love in a state of immortality: although it must at the same time be confessed, that he throws no small obscurity over his allegory, by substituting the person and attributes of Cupid the son of Venus, for those of the elder Cupid, born of the egg of Night, and coeval with Chaos.

The story runs through the fourth, fifth, and sixth Books of the ROMANCE of the GOLDEN ASS, and is told by an old woman to a captive lady in a cave of robbers.

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CUPID AND PSYCHE.

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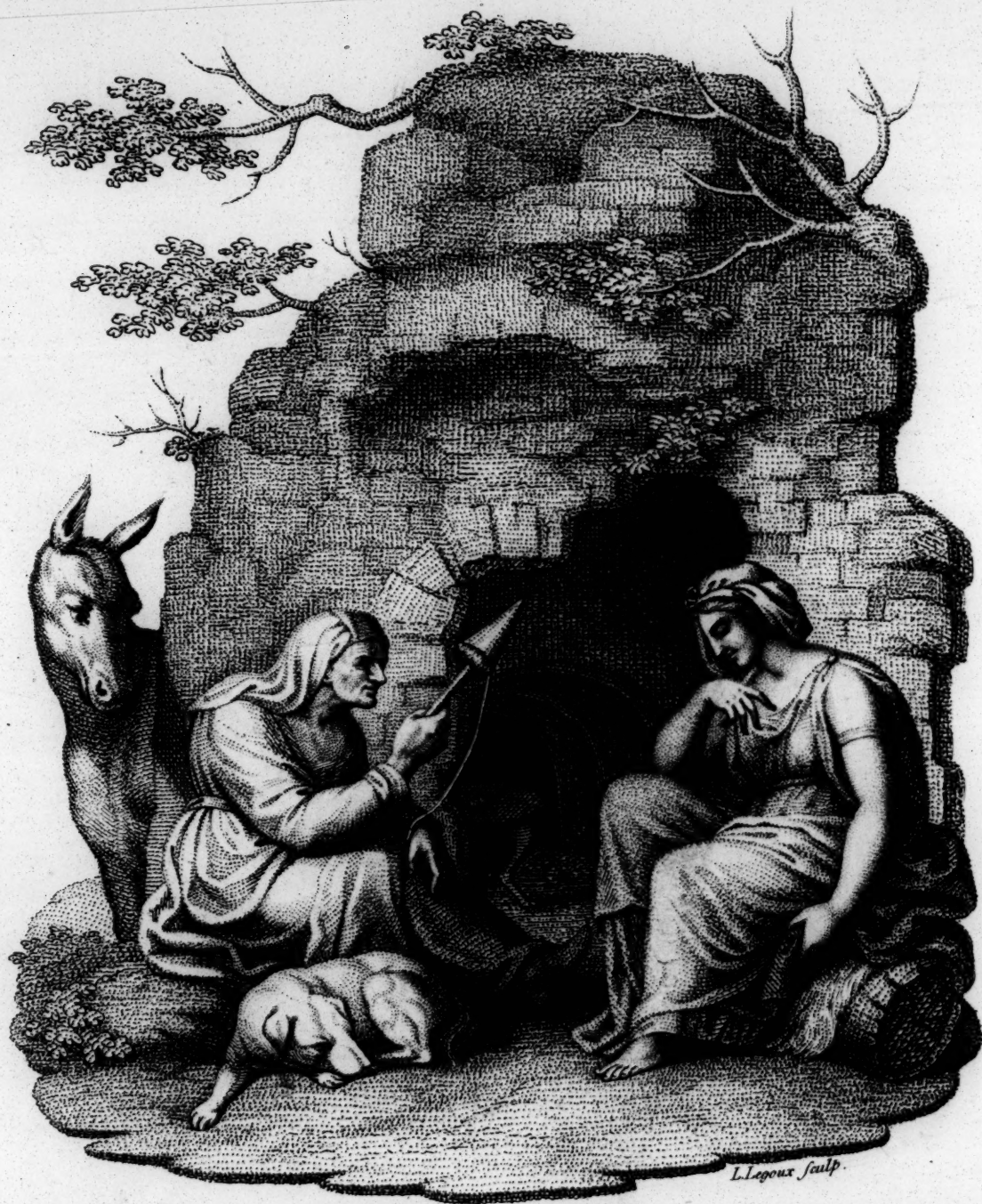
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## CUPID AND PSYCHE.

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### I.

O STAY those tears! the beldam cries,  
Ill dreams good fortunes oft forerun,  
Like clouds which skirt the morning skies,  
But melt before the noon-day sun.

Chase from thy soul this idle grief,  
And let my words thine ear engage;  
Thy fears perchance may find relief,  
E'en from the garrulous tales of age.

### II.

Once stately reign'd a king and queen,  
As bards of other times have told,  
The happiest that were ever seen  
To flourish in the days of old.

Three daughters bless'd their nuptial bed;  
Two daughters exquisitely fair,  
Who many a fond youth captive led,  
Made many a hapless youth despair.

The youngest—but no tongue so warm  
Though matchless eloquence be given,  
May dare pourtray her finish'd form,  
The 'prodigality of heaven!'

Say, to delight the wondering earth,  
Does she amongst us mortals roam,  
Who from the blue deep took her birth,  
Her nurture from the sparkling foam?

O'er her warm cheek's vermilion dye,  
Waves, lightly waves, her dark-brown hair;  
Bright as the winter star her eye,  
Yet peaceful as the summer air.



No one to Paphos takes his way,  
 Cnidos, Cythera, charm no more;  
 No throngs, with votive chaplets gay,  
 The *immortal* VENUS now adore.

*Her* temples all in ruin lie,  
 Her altars cold, to dust resign'd,  
 Her withering garlands flap, and fly,  
 And rustle in the hollow wind.

Whilst on the mortal maid they shower  
 The incense they to *her* should bring,  
 And offer to this fairer flower  
 The fairest flow'rets of the spring.

From isles afar, from distant lands,  
 Unnumber'd votaries press around,  
 And view entranc'd, with folded hands,  
 Celestial footsteps print the ground.

To her young girls their wishes breathe,  
 Commend the fond youth to her care;  
 Bind round her brows the rosy wreath,  
 And sigh to her the ardent prayer.

## III.

Parent of nature, nurse of joy,  
 From whom the elements arise;  
 Thou to whom Ida's shepherd boy  
 Rightly adjudg'd the golden prize,

O VENUS! will thy better part,  
 Immortal love, incline to spare;  
 Or female envy taint thy heart,  
 And plant the Fiend of Vengeance there?

VENUS has called her winged child,  
 And with malignant pleasure laugh'd,  
 That boy who lawless, wicked, wild,  
 At random aims the flaming shaft;



Him, who all deeds of darkness owns,  
 Who breaks so oft the nuptial tye,  
 And, whilst his luckless victim groans,  
 On careless pinions flutters by.—

The dangerous Power, to PSYCHE's bower  
 She with vindictive fury led,  
 And bade him thus his vengeance shower  
 On the detested virgin's head :—

“ By a mother's sacred name,  
 “ By thine arrows tipp'd with flame,  
 “ By thy joys which often borrow  
 “ Of Despair most bitter sorrow,  
 “ Make thy parent's rival know  
 “ Unimaginable woe !  
 “ May her youth's unequall'd bloom  
 “ Unrequited love consume,

" For some wretch of abject birth,  
 " Wandering outcast of the earth ;  
 " Be for him her fond heart torn,  
 " May e'en he her torments scorn,  
 " That all womankind may see  
 " What it is to injure me.  
 " Make thy parent's rival know,  
 " Unimaginable woe ! "

Then kiss'd her son, and fleet as wind  
 She seeks old Ocean's dark-green caves—  
 Her ivory feet with roses twin'd  
 Brush lightly o'er the trembling waves.

## IV.

Young PSYCHE still more beauteous grows,  
 She seems unconscious of her charms ;  
 Yet no one plucks this opening rose,  
 She takes no suitor to her arms.



Each sister shines a regal bride,  
 In sweet connubial union blest;  
 Each moves conspicuous in the pride  
 Of scepter'd state and ermin'd vest.

But PSYCHE owns no lawful lord,  
 She walks a goddess from above;  
 All saw, all prais'd, and all ador'd,  
 But no one ever dar'd to love.

Yet half-form'd wishes still will ply  
 With feverish dreams the unpractis'd mind,  
 When 'the clos'd eye, unknowing why,'  
 Its wonted slumbers fails to find.

Though the blank heart no passion owns,  
 Some soft ideas will intrude,  
 And the sick girl in silence moans  
 Her dull unvaried solitude!

## V.

Her father sees his darling's grief,  
Suspects the jealous wrath of heaven,  
Hopes from the Oracle relief,  
And asks the fate the Gods had given.

“ On the mountain summit laid  
“ In her grave-clothes be the maid.  
“ Never shall thine eyes behold  
“ Son-in-law of mortal mould ;  
“ But a monster girt with wings,  
“ Fiercest of created things,  
“ Scattering flames his hours employing,  
“ Heaven alike and earth annoying :  
“ Him the dread decrees of fate  
“ Destine for thy daughter's mate.”



Graceful his silver tresses flow—

He does not rend his hoary hair,  
He utters not the shriek of woe,  
Nor vents the curses of despair;

He does not wring his aged hands,  
No tear-drop fills his frozen eye;  
But as a statue fix'd he stands  
In speechless, senseless agony!

## VI.

'Tis hard to force its better part  
From the distracted soul away;  
But heaven decrees—man's bursting heart  
In vain repines—he must obey!

Now rose the inauspicious morn,  
Mantling in clouds the low'ring skies,  
When from her parents must be torn  
The victim of the Destinies.

Loud wailings fill the troubled air,  
Cold tremors every heart assail,  
And the low murmurs of despair  
Ride sullen on the hollow gale.

Onward the sad procession goes :  
Do wedding guests then creep so slow ?  
Say, is it from the bridemaids flows  
The long and sable stole of woe ?

And who are they, who, rob'd in white,  
Their black funereal torches wave,  
Which shed around such pale blue light  
As issues from the dead man's grave ?

They are the bridal train—yet mark,  
They carol loud with tuneful breath :  
'Tis not the song of marriage—hark !  
They slowly chant the dirge of Death.



The mountain's utmost height they gain,  
 They pour the agonizing prayer;  
 For soon the melancholy train  
 Must leave the sad devoted fair.

Yet PSYCHE chides the tears that fall,  
 E'en in her shroud o'er masters fear,  
 Wraps round her beauteous limbs the pall,  
 And dauntless mounts the bridal bier.

## VII.

O SLEEP! sweet friend of humankind,  
 Whose magic chains all joy to wear,  
 Who, soother of the afflicted mind,  
 Strew'st roses on the bed of care;

'Twas thou, o'er PSYCHE's fluttering soul,  
 Benignly shedd'st thine opiate charms;  
 Spell-bound she own'd thy mild control,  
 Soft cradled in thy downy arms:

Till wafted on young ZEPHYR's wings  
 To a fair vale's sequester'd bowers ;  
 Who the unconscious maiden brings,  
 And lays her on a couch of flowers.

## VIII.

She wakes—and to her glad survey  
 Rise round her, high o'er-arching trees,  
 Whose branches gemm'd with blossoms gay,  
 Throw perfumes to the lingering breeze.

And, shaded from the noon-tide beam,  
 There slowly, slowly curling roll'd  
 Its silvery waves a lucent stream  
 O'er sands of granulated gold.

And in the centre of the wood,  
 Not such as kings inhabit here,  
 A vast and tower-flank'd palace stood,  
 Nor such as mortal hands could rear.



Of ivory was the fretted roof,  
 On golden columns proudly rais'd,  
 And silver carvings massy proof  
 The walls of ebony emblaz'd.

Round lustres wreaths of diamonds fix'd,  
 Their prisms rays profusely pour,  
 And amethysts with emeralds mix'd  
 Inlay the tessellated floor.

While thus the startled stranger greet,  
 Within no earthly form confin'd,  
 Voices, as distant music sweet,  
 That floats upon the evening wind :

“ Lull to rest this causeless fear ;  
 “ PSYCHE ! thou art mistress here.  
 “ Happy beyond human measure,  
 “ Slake thy thirsting soul in pleasure ;

“ Slaves to thy majestic lover,  
“ Air-form’d sprites around thee hover,  
“ Ever for thy bidding stay,  
“ Instant thy commands obey.”

—And ere the lingering word is said,  
Quick as the lightning glance of thought,  
With sumptuous fare the banquet’s spread,  
By her aërial servants brought.

And flute, and harp, and voice, to fill  
The choral harmony unite,  
And make each raptur’d nerve to thrill  
And vibrate with intense delight.

Swiftly the happy hours are fled !  
For night invites her to repose,  
And on the silk-embroider’d bed  
Her wearied frame the virgin throws.



Now Darkness o'er the silent sphere  
Her raven-tinctur'd reign assumes—  
She stops her breath, she chills to hear  
The rustling sound of waving plumes.

All hush'd around—no friend beside—  
Her heart beats high with new alarms!  
—The dreaded husband claims his bride,  
And folds her in his eager arms!

Yet while thick shades are o'er them spread,  
(How hard that lovely couch to scorn!)  
Soft-gliding from the nuptial bed,  
He flies before the golden morn.

While viewless harps incessant ring  
To greet her on her bridal day,  
And viewless minstrels gaily sing  
The Hymeneal roundelay.

And aye when Eve in grateful hour  
 Sheds odours from her dewy wings,  
 The UNKNOWN seeks his mystic bower,  
 And to the expectant fair-one springs :

In frantic passion's giddy whirl  
 Past, quickly past, his transient stay,  
 He still eludes the curious girl,  
 And steals unseen, unfelt, away ;

Ere from the bosom of the Night  
 Young Twilight scents the matin air,  
 And in her gray vest rises light  
 Spangled with gems her musky hair.

## IX.

Though circling o'er, the laughing hours  
 In still-increasing raptures roll'd,  
 Oft gleams the path besprent with flowers  
 With tints too clear, too bright to hold !



Thus speaks the INVISIBLE, and sighs,  
 And clasps her in his warm embrace,  
 While the large tear-drops from his eyes  
 Fall frequent on her burning face :

“ Life of my beating heart ! o’er thee  
 “ Impending danger scowls : beware !  
 “ With anxious soul I shuddering see  
 “ The cruel fates their lures prepare.

“ Soon shall thy sisters seek thee near,  
 “ With loud lament and piercing wail,  
 “ And thou each well known voice shalt hear,  
 “ Borne fitful on the moaning gale.

“ Then, though thy very soul will yearn  
 “ To bid thy messengers convey  
 “ The wish’d-for visitants ; O turn !  
 “ Turn from their plaints thine ear away.

“ If nature’s feelings conquer still,  
“ And thou must wayward tempt thy fate,  
“ Thou know’st, obedient to thy will,  
“ What mystic menials round thee wait.

“ Yet, as thou’dst shun eternal bale,  
“ Or never-ceasing misery dread,  
“ Our dark mysterious union veil  
“ In the deep silence of the dead.

“ For these the truths the Fates unfold :  
“ We in these bowers may ever dwell,  
“ If mortal eye shall ne’er behold  
“ This form, nor tongue my secrets tell.

“ While from our glad embrace will rise,  
“ Pure from all taint of earthly leaven,  
“ An infant inmate of the skies,  
“ The fairest of the host of heaven.



" Then spare thyself, thy husband spare,  
 " And spare thy child, as yet unborn ;  
 " Dash not the dark clouds of despair  
 " Upon the ruddy hues of morn."

## X.

Gaily we launch our little bark,  
 The sun-beams on the waters play,  
 While close behind the ravenous shark  
 Expecting waits his destin'd prey.

We sail along the whirlpool's brink,  
 Unheeding join the song of glee,  
 But ah ! too late aghast we shrink,  
 When whelm'd beneath the treacherous sea.

PSYCHE has heard the warning strain—  
 Resistless wishes restless spring,  
 She slights the strain, and bids her train  
 Of swift-wing'd sprites her sisters bring.

“ If nature’s feelings conquer still,  
“ And thou must wayward tempt thy fate,  
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 Of swift-wing'd sprites her sisters bring.

Her childhood's friends she joys to meet,  
 No shade of danger here can find :  
 Though mingled in communion sweet,  
 They cannot sound the viewless mind.

Lock'd in her ever-faithful breast,  
 Her secret all discovery braves,  
 Safe as the orient pearl, will rest,  
 Beneath unfathomable waves.

“ And who is he whose natal star  
 “ With such unrivall'd splendor shines,  
 “ Whose countless stores exceed so far  
 “ All India's inexhausted mines ?”

“ O! 'tis a youth whose ruddy cheek  
 “ Vies with the morn's vermilion dye,  
 “ Or emulates the clouds that streak  
 “ With crimson tints the evening sky.



" And mantled he in lively green  
 " Up the high mountain joys to go,  
 " Or in the wild-wood chace is seen  
 " The foremost with his silver bow."

Homeward the sisters now return,  
 Their bosoms charg'd with deadly hate,  
 And with excessive envy burn,  
 And curse their own inferior fate.

# XI.

Exulting PSYCHE bids again  
 The obedient sprites her sisters bear;  
 Borne by the ministering train,  
 Again arrive the baleful pair.

" And who is he whose natal star  
 " With such unrivall'd splendor shines,  
 " Whose countless stores exceed so far  
 " All India's inexhausted mines?"

“ O! he is one unbroke by care,  
“ The rose of beauty lingers yet,  
“ Though here and there a hoary hair  
“ Gleams silvery 'midst his locks of jet.”

“ Cease, cease those fables,” swift replied  
One sister with unfeeling scorn,  
And “ cease thy tales,” the other cried,  
“ Nor strive to hide thy state forlorn.”

“ Still ever erring from the truth,  
“ Thy childish tongue deceitful ran—  
“ Thy husband neither glows with youth,  
“ Nor the gray honors boasts of man ;

“ He wears no human form—we know  
“ Unerring are the words of heaven ;  
“ And of all humankind the foe  
“ Thee for a mate the Gods have given.



“ We know him well—then wherefore hide

“ From thy dear sisters’ love thy care,

“ Nor to our kindred breasts confide

“ The ills that thou art doom’d to bear ?”

Then as they wipe the artful tear,

Loud on the pitying Gods they call,

Till sooth’d by love, or urg’d by fear,

The trembling PSYCHE tells them all.

“ We knew it well !—nay, do not start,”

The base malignant fury cried,

“ We know, unhappy girl ! thou art

“ A vast and venom’d serpent’s bride.

“ We learnt it from the neighbouring hinds,

“ Who every night his form survey,

“ As through yon crystal stream he winds

“ In slimy folds his sinuous way.

“ Or as at day-break he along  
“ In many a spiral volume trails,  
“ And vibrates quick his forky tongue,  
“ And glitters in his burnish'd scales.

“ Yes! though with heaven's own transports warm  
“ Thy soul in boundless rapture swims,  
“ Soon, coil'd around thy slender form,  
“ He'll writhing crush thy mangled limbs!”

Thus the hyæna speaks and weeps—  
Cold damps on PSYCHE's forehead start,  
Her tingling flesh with horror creeps,  
The life-blood curdling in her heart.

All ghastly pale her beauteous cheek,  
She throws her moonstruck gaze around,  
Utters a feeble, faltering shriek,  
And senseless sinks upon the ground.



Then as some parch'd and withering flower  
 Reviving sucks the evening dew,  
 To bide the insufferable power  
 Of the meridian sun anew ;

So, when the UNKNOWN's distracted wife  
 Recovers her unwelcome breath,  
 She only hails returning life  
 To shudder at approaching death.

## XII.

The sisters still their schemes pursue,  
 Their vengeance ripens in the bud,  
 And thus they urge her to embrue  
 Her weak and innocent hands in blood.

“ Cut thou the knot the Fates have tied,  
 “ Nor let dismay thine efforts damp,  
 “ But in the figur'd tapestry hide,  
 “ To guide thy stroke, this faithful lamp.

" And take this dagger keen and bright,  
 " And when his eyes are clos'd in rest,  
 " Directed by the friendly light,  
 " Deep plunge it in the monster's breast."

Thou who in love's soft dreams hast felt,  
 Whilst envying Gods were hovering near,  
 Thy soul in sweet delirium melt,  
 Say, canst thou slay thy lover dear?

And canst thou spread thy murderous toils  
 For him thy soul's best joy of late?  
 Ah me! her sickening heart recoils,  
 Disgusted from her viperous mate.

### XIII.

Her mantle o'er them Darkness throws,  
 On the UNKNOWN soft languors creep,  
 Who leaves his false one to repose,  
 And sinks into the arms of sleep.



Now trembling, now distracted; bold,  
And now irresolute she seems;  
The blue lamp glimmers in her hold,  
And in her hand the dagger gleams.

Prepar'd to strike she verges near,  
The blue light glimmering from above,  
The HIDEOUS SIGHT expects with fear,  
—And gazes on the GOD OF LOVE!

Not such a young and frolic child  
As poets feign, or sculptors plan;  
No, no, she sees with transport wild,  
Eternal beauty veil'd in man.

His cheek's ingrain'd carnation glow'd  
Like rubies on a bed of pearls,  
And down his ivory shoulders flow'd  
In clustering braids his golden curls.

Soft as the cygnet's down his wings;  
And as the falling snow-flake fair,  
Each light elastic feather springs,  
And dances in the balmy air,

The pure and vital stream he breathes,  
Makes e'en the lamp shine doubly bright,  
Which its gay flame enamour'd wreathes,  
And gleams with scintillating light.

There loosely strung that bow was hung,  
Whose twanging cord Immortals fear,  
And on the floor his quiver flung,  
Lay, stor'd with many an arrow, near.

Grasp'd in her sacrilegious hands,  
She with the arrows play'd, and laugh'd—  
The crimson on her finger stands,  
She's wounded by the poison'd shaft!



The red blood riots in her veins,  
Her feverish pulses wildly beat,  
Whilst every waken'd fibre strains  
And throbs with palpitating heat.

With eyes, where sparkling rapture swims,  
She contemplates his sleeping grace,  
Hangs fondly o'er his well-turn'd limbs,  
And joins to his her fervid face.

But as her views intent to foil,  
Or as that form it long'd to kiss,  
Dropt from the lamp the burning oil,  
Arous'd him from his dreams of bliss.

Sudden loud thunders shake the skies,  
The enchanted palace sinks around,  
And sanguine-streaming fires arise,  
Meteorous from the trembling ground.

And swift as when in fury hurls  
 JOVE's red right arm the forky light,  
 The wounded Godhead eddying whirls  
 Into the heaven of heavens his flight.

## XIV.

In vapoury twilight damp and chill,  
 The languid star fades pale away,  
 The high peak of the distant hill  
 Is gilded by the gleams of day.

And who is that distracted fair  
 Reclin'd beneath yon spreading yew,  
 Swoln are her eyes, her dark-brown hair  
 Is pearly with the morning dew?

Her spring of life now seems to flag,  
 In wild delirium now she raves—  
 O, see! from that o'erjutting crag  
 She plunges in the foaming waves!



But he who o'er the stream presides  
 The frantic girl in pity bore,  
 Quick darting through his billowy tides,  
 In safety to the opposing shore.

There in a bower with wood-moss lin'd,  
 With violets blue, and cowslips gay,  
 Old PAN, by CANNA's side reclin'd,  
 Sung many a rustic roundelay.

While wandering from his heedless eyes,  
 His white goats cropt the neighbouring brake,  
 The God in this unfashion'd guise  
 With no ungentle feelings spake :

“ Sweet girl ! though rural is the air  
 “ That I the king of shepherds wear,  
 “ As assay'd silver, tried, and sage,  
 “ And prudent are the words of age.

" Then list, O list, sweet girl, to me !  
 " By my divining power I see,  
 " Both from thy often-reeling pace,  
 " And from thy pale and haggard face,  
 " And from thy deep and frequent sigh,  
 " While grief hangs heavy on thine eye,  
 " That all the ills thou'rt doom'd to prove,  
 " Are judgments of the GOD of LOVE.—  
 " Then list, O list, sweet girl, to me,  
 " Seek not by death thy soul to free,  
 " But cast thy cares, thy griefs away,  
 " To CUPID without ceasing pray,  
 " And soon that soft luxurious boy  
 " Will tune anew thy mind to joy."

## XV.

The shipman seeks his native vales,  
 He's come afar from o'er the sea,  
 He longs to tell his wond'rous tales  
 Of dangers on the stormy lee.



He'll tell the wonder-stirring tales  
 To those dear friends he left behind—  
 Ah me! within his native vales  
 His sickening soul no friend can find.

Thus PSYCHE to one sister goes,  
 That sister's vital spark is fled :  
 To meet the other next she rose,  
 But she is number'd with the dead.

And she will seek her father's state,  
 And there her parents' blessings crave—  
 Press'd by the heavy hand of fate,  
 They too rest peaceful in the grave!

## XVI.

And now the milk-white Albatross,  
 To VENUS who in Ocean laves  
 Circled with Sea-nymphs, scuds across  
 On oary wings the rippling waves.

“ Great queen,” the feather’d chatterer said,  
“ Know’st thou not what thy hopeful son,  
“ Enamour’d of a worthless maid,  
“ Has in his amorous folly done ?

“ No Nymph, no Muse thy boy adores,  
“ No Grace, no Goddess is his flame,  
“ His love he on a mortal pours,  
“ And PSYCHE is the damsel’s name.

“ And groaning now within thy fane,  
“ In anguish penitent lies he,  
“ For he too late has felt the bane  
“ Of female curiosity.”

VENUS then calls her doves, and soon  
With quick step mounts her golden car,  
Arch’d inwards like the waning moon,  
And brilliant as the morning star.



Around her sparrows chirping play,  
Exulting strain their little throats,  
And all the warblers of the spray  
Pour sweetly their mellifluous notes.

She cuts the clouds, she skims the heaven,  
Till, reach'd the palace of the sky,  
Her fanciful behest is given  
To the wing'd herald MERCURY.

“ Take thou this volume in thy hand  
“ With PSYCHE's history mark'd, and name,  
“ And thus in every clime and land,  
“ And every state aloud proclaim—  
  
“ If any man shall seize and bring  
“ The flying daughter of a king,  
“ Handmaid of VENUS, or will tell  
“ Where PSYCHE now conceal'd may dwell,

" Let him to Murtia straight repair,  
 " Make the much wish'd discovery there,  
 " And CYTHEREA, queen of charms,  
 " Sole sovereign of extatic blisses,  
 " Will clasp him in her grateful arms,  
 " And greet him with seven fervid kisses!"

## XVII.

Now four long tedious moons are spent,  
 She hears no tidings of her lord,  
 Yet still her wandering steps are bent  
 In search of him her soul ador'd.

She pray'd at CERES' corn-wreath'd shrine,  
 And JUNO's altar deck'd with flowers;  
 But sternly bound by pact divine,  
 No succour lend the pitying Powers.



Till wearied with unnumber'd woes,  
And render'd valiant by despair,  
She to the Murtian temple goes—  
Perchance her true love tarries there.

O, turn thee from the perilous way!  
Ah! wherefore work thine own annoy?  
Yon priestess, Custom, marks her prey,  
And eyes thee with malignant joy.

Instant she on her victim springs,  
She mocks the unavailing prayer,  
Furious her withered hand enrings,  
And drags her by her flowing hair.

Then laughing VENUS bids with speed,  
Her handmaids on the pavement throw  
Of all the flowering plants the seed  
That in the Hesperian gardens blow.

And she must each assort before  
 The dewfall shall the damp grass steep,  
 While sentry at the chamber door  
 SOLICITUDE and SORROW keep.

A little ant the mandate heard,  
 The oppressive mandate with disdain;  
 For e'en the weakest 'tis averr'd  
 Will on the oppressor turn again.

And insect myriads never ceas'd  
 Their labors till the setting sun,  
 When VENUS, rising from the feast,  
 With wonder saw the hard task done.

### XVIII.

Now rose, in glory rose, the morn,  
 And VENUS bids her captive go  
 To yon fair stream, whose currents, borne  
 In circling eddies, babbling flow.



“ There grazing the wild flock,” she cried,  
“ With golden fleeces shalt thou see,  
“ Then from the bright ram’s shaggy side,  
“ The precious wool bring back to me.”

Trembling she goes—she gazes round,—  
Say whence that heavenly voice proceeds,  
That like the soft flute’s mellow sound  
Breathes sweetly through the whispering reeds?

“ Fierce while glares the noon-day sun,  
“ Thou the dread adventure shun,  
“ While the ram his rival scorns  
“ Furious with his jutting horns;  
“ But beneath yon plane-tree’s shade,  
“ In concealment be thou laid,  
“ Till the eve-star, pale and fair,  
“ Glimmers through the misty air;  
“ Then in safety may’st thou pull  
“ From his fleece the golden wool.”

Yet though this labour she performs,  
 No grace with VENUS can she find,  
 Her stony heart no pity warms,  
 Another trial waits behind.

## XIX.

“ Down from that cloud-capt mountain’s brow,  
 “ A never-ceasing cataract pours,  
 “ Whose feathery surges dash below  
 “ In thunder on the Stygian shores ;  
  
 “ Thou on the dangerous brink must stand,  
 “ And dip this goblet in the spring :  
 “ Descending then with steady hand  
 “ The black transparent crystal bring.”

Nimbly the mountain steep she’d climb,  
 But thence impervious rocks arise,  
 Whose awful foreheads frown sublime,  
 And lift their bold crags to the skies.



While horrid voices howl around,  
    “Fly! swiftly fly!”—“Forbear, forbear!”  
Vast stones, with heart-appalling sound,  
    Are hurl’d into the groaning air.

And on the right, and on the left,  
    Four ever-watchful dragons fly,  
Flame-breathing through each dizzy cleft,  
    Their long and flexile necks they ply.

Though beauty’s queen no pity feels,  
    The bold rapacious bird of Jove  
His succour to the afflicted deals,  
    In reverence to the God of Love.

He sees her blasted hopes expire,  
    He leaves the liquid fields of light,  
And whirling round in many a gyre  
    Majestic wings his rapid flight.

High o'er the dragons see him tower,  
 Up-darting through the azure air !  
 And high above the stony shower  
 The bowl his crooked talons bear.

Now to the grateful maid he brings  
 The sparkling waters bright and clear,  
 Then spreads again his ample wings,  
 And soaring quits this nether sphere.

## XX.

Can Beauty no compassion know ?  
 Sure Mercy must her bright beams dart,  
 And piercing through those hills of snow,  
 Melt e'en the adamant heart !

Ah no ! by VENUS' stern command  
 PSYCHE to PROSERPINE is sped :  
 Shivering she seeks the dreary land,  
 The sun-less mansions of the dead.



The unopen'd casket she must bring,  
Whose weak and fragile sides entomb  
From beauty's uncreated spring  
The essence of eternal bloom.

Fearful and sad she journey'd on,  
While silence rul'd the midnight hour,  
To where the unsteady moon-beam shone  
Reflected from a ruin'd tower.

And thence she heard these warning notes,  
Caroll'd as clear as clear might be,  
Sweet as the mermaid's lay that floats  
Melodious on the charmed sea.

“ Sunk her spirit, whelm'd in woe,  
“ Does the royal captive go?  
“ Does her heart, oppress'd with dread,  
“ Shudder to approach the dead?

" Where the cavern yawns around,  
 " Enter there the dark profound :  
 " Soon thy path a crippled ass,  
 " By a cripple led, shall pass,  
 " Fainting they beneath their task—  
 " He assistance oft will ask,  
 " But in these infernal lands  
 " Touch not with unhallow'd hands,  
 " Cautious thou, without delay  
 " Onward, onward, speed thy way !  
 " In old CHARON's creaking boat,  
 " O'er the dead stream thou must float ;  
 " There the livid corse thou'lt see  
 " Stretch his blue-swoln hand to thee,  
 " Frown thou on his suit severe,  
 " Mercy were destruction here !  
 " See those crones that on the left  
 " Weave the many-colour'd web,  
 " See them, how they this way wend  
 " Asking thee thy aid to lend,



“ But in these infernal lands  
“ Touch not with unhallow'd hands,  
“ Cautious thou, without delay  
“ Onward, onward, speed thy way !  
“ Dipt the sop in Hydromel  
“ Charm the three-neck'd dog of Hell ;  
“ Then from her imperial seat  
“ Thee the shadowy queen shall greet,  
“ Shall for thee the feast prepare—  
“ Thou that feast refuse to share,  
“ But upon the pavement spread  
“ Take the black and mouldy bread—  
“ By the queen soon set at large,  
“ Back now bear thy precious charge :  
“ Over all, thy curious mind  
“ In the chains of prudence bind,  
“ Nor the strict command infringe,  
“ Move not thou the golden hinge !  
“ Gladsome then without delay  
“ Onward, onward, speed thy way !”

## XXI.

—She has seen the secrets of the deep,  
 And through o'er-whelming horrors past,  
 How her recovering pulses leap,  
 To hail the day-star's gleams at last!

“ Do I then bear eternal bloom  
 “ Alone to make my tyrant shine?  
 “ Say, rather let its tints illumine  
 “ These wan and woe-worn cheeks of mine;

“ Whilst I will revel in the rays  
 “ Of beauty in the casket hid;”—  
 Alas! no beam of beauty plays  
 Delightful from the lifted lid!

But from the empty casket sprang  
 Of Stygian fogs the baleful breath,  
 And heavy o'er her blanch'd frame hang  
 The damp unwholesome dews of DEATH.



## XXII.

The fields of nature to deform  
Not always drives the furious blast,  
And shall misfortune's moral storm  
'Gainst meek endurance ever last?

No, though unnumber'd ills assail,  
Though man behold no succour nigh,  
Though with the frailest of the frail,  
Presumption tempt the prying eye;

Yet, if the germ of virtue live,  
Let constant faith her sufferings brave;  
Goodness is powerful to forgive,  
And Heaven omnipotent to save.

CUPID, with downcast, humbled mien,  
Has to the THUNDERER breath'd his care,  
The ALMIGHTY FATHER smil'd serene,  
And granted his adorer's prayer.

Now flies he joyful to her aid,  
He gently rais'd her falling head,  
With his bright arrow touch'd the maid,  
And rous'd her from her cheerless bed.

He animates anew her charms,  
Warm o'er her breathes the light of love,  
Then bears her in his circling arms,  
And stands before the throne of JOVE.

But on the Sovereign of the skies  
What fleshly optics dare to gaze?  
And PSYCHE with averted eyes  
Shrinks trembling from th' excessive blaze :

'Till, HEBE raising to her lips  
The ambrosial Goblet foaming high,  
Wrapt in extatic trance she sips  
The fount of IMMORTALITY !



Purpled with roses dance the HOURS,  
 The GRACES scattering odours play,  
 And crown'd with never-fading flowers  
 The MUSES hymn the jocund lay.

And onwards up the ethereal arch  
 Glad HYMEN leads the festive train,  
 As o'er the rainbow's hues they march,  
 And links them in his golden chain.

While soon to bless the faithful pair ;  
 With eye of laughter, soul of flame,  
 Burst into life a daughter fair,  
 And PLEASURE was the infant's name.

FINIS.

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